



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 19, 2004

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SAN DIEGO BIRDS TEST POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS ***Vector Control Encourages Dead Bird Reporting***

Vector Control officials warned San Diego residents today that two more San Diego birds have tested positive for West Nile virus, including a Western Scrub-Jay from Valley Center and a Cooper's Hawk from Pacific Beach, bringing the County's total count to 10 positive birds and one positive horse.

"Reporting of dead birds is critical to the detection of West Nile virus in the County," said Gary Erbeck, Director of the County Department of Environmental Health. To date more than 1,000 dead birds have been reported to Vector Control, of which 204 have been submitted for testing. At this time, Vector Control is only testing crows, ravens, jays, hawks, owls and falcons. The public should report dead birds if the birds meet the following criteria: they have been dead for less than 24 hours; are not stiff and do not have a foul odor; are not covered with ants or flies; and if their bodies are intact and have not been damaged by a car or killed by animals.

Vector Control staff routinely treats over 700 known mosquito breeding sites, including 27 large aerial application areas. Since backyard sources significantly contribute to mosquito breeding, the public is encouraged to inspect their yards for standing water and dump it out. Green, unused swimming pools can also produce thousands of biting mosquitoes. Free mosquito-eating fish are available to residents who have ornamental ponds, fountains and unused swimming pools.

To report dead birds, mosquito breeding sources, and to find out where to get free Mosquito Fish, please call the County of San Diego's West Nile virus Info Line at: (888) 551-INFO (4636).

Mosquito Fish distribution sites can also be found by visiting the official County West Nile virus website at www.SDFightTheBite.com. The website also contains valuable information about West Nile virus in the County, state and nation. It also provides information about the results of aerial applications of larvicides in the selected mosquito breeding areas.

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